

"We think too much about effective methods of teaching and not enough about effective methods of learning."

– John Carolus, S. J.

FACILITATING A LEARNER-CENTERED CLASSROOM

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

In the learner-centered classroom, the teacher:

- acts as a partner with students in the learning process
- gives learners voice and choice according to their needs, age, and abilities
- makes instructional decisions based on learner's performance
- engages learners in cognitively challenging real-world tasks
- creates multiple opportunities for learners to interpret and express ideas about topics of interest to them
- provides learners opportunities to collaborate while using language to accomplish a meaningful task
- allows for ongoing feedback from a variety of sources to improve learner's performance



IN A LEARNER-CENTERED CLASSROOM, THE TEACHER GRADUALLY RELEASES CONTROL OF THE LEARNING TO THE LEARNERS

Teacher Responsibility	Providing input	Sharing	Guiding	Applying	Student Responsibility
	The teacher demonstrates, models, explains to make input comprehensible. As learners gain proficiency, the teacher guides them in the selection of authentic text.	The teacher scaffolds instruction and begins to guide student work.	The teacher offers support and encouragement and provides feedback.	The teacher monitors and provides feedback.	
	Learners engage with the content, process input.	Learners contribute and begin to work with teacher support.	Learners engage in pair and small group activities that allow them to interpret and express meaning for real-world purposes.	Learners work independently demonstrating progress toward learning targets and self-assess their progress.	
	I do.	We do.		You do.	

Students interview one another to find similarities and differences between them. Once they have gathered that information, they talk with a small group of classmates to decide with whom they want to room during their trip to China.

Student pairs investigate one side of an issue and debate with a pair who has the opposing side. Pairs switch sides and debate again. Two pairs come together to reach consensus about the issue.

Students choose possible activities that they might do in a city. They decide what they will do on their visit and create a google map to guide their tour.



STARTALK-endorsed Principles in Practice

The STARTALK-endorsed Principles describe characteristics of highly effective language teaching and learning. An ideal learning experience is framed by a standards-based and thematically organized curriculum that integrates culture, content and language. Learners work with authentic, age-appropriate texts in *a learner-centered environment* as they engage in real-world performance tasks that allow them to use the target language beyond the classroom.

Collaborative Learning Experiences From Model STARTALK Curricula

Students are asked whether they love, like, dislike, or hate certain weather conditions, seasons, and days of the week. The four corners of the classroom represent these different opinions. The students move to the corners that correspond to their opinions and compare their ideas. (NM)

Students are asked whether they love, like, dislike, or hate certain weather conditions, seasons, and days of the week. The four corners of the classroom represent these different opinions. The students move to the corners that correspond to their opinions and compile a list of clothing items they will pack for their preferred weather condition. They will share ideas with the class. (NH)

Teacher sets up a “debate around the room” for agree, disagree, I don’t know. As suggestions for a trip are announced, learners gather in the applicable place in the room. The group discusses their ideas, chooses one person to report their ideas to the whole class. (IM/IL)

Learners designated A and others designated B receive the same picture of a family at a celebration. Each student has different clues about the people pictured. Learners ask and answer questions about the people to determine their identities. (NH/IL)

Teacher attaches a sticky note to each student’s back with the name of a famous person from the target culture. Students circulate to ask and answer questions to find their identities. Learners do this as a role-play. (NM/NH)

Working in small groups, learners pass around a picture of a family at a target language restaurant. Each student within the group contributes a word, phrase, or sentence(s) to the overall description. (NM/NH)

Teacher divides class into groups of 3 or 4. Each group is in charge of scanning different websites for travel opportunities in the target culture. Teacher bookmarks the sites. Learners fill in a grid with relevant information to share with the class. (IL/IM)

After reading a text about environmental issues in the target culture, students write basic, complex, & abstract questions. Learners form two circles, one inside the other. Students seated in the inside circle ask questions and other learners respond, ask for clarification, etc. When topic is exhausted, students change places. The outer circle becomes the inner circle and the discussion continues. (IM/IH)

For more information on STARTALK-endorsed Principles see the following:

STELLA Planning Module: How does my planning of learning experiences prepare for student learning?

STARTALK-endorsed Principles for Effective Teaching & Learning and
Characteristics of Effective Language Lessons:
<https://startalk.umd.edu/principles/>

